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# THE RAGTIMER

MARCH-APRIL

MAY-JUNE

1982

PUBLISHED BY

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF CLASSICAL RAGTIME

## SOCIETY REPRINT SHEET MUSIC

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# RAGTIME...
# UNDER YOUR HAT

FOUNDED 1962
INCORPORATED 1972

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
INCORPORATED

is a non-profit corporation having the following objects;

To preserve classical ragtime music and to pursue such other activities as shall serve to maintain and develop interest in classical ragtime music and music related thereto.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1982

John Arpin - President
John Fairhead - Treasurer
Mark Wittmann - Secretary

Bill McCrostie
Marj. Wittmann

Editor - Jack Hutton

As you'll learn in this issue, one of the sad things about our anniversary year is that midway through that year we have already lost two links with our past. Marion Blake died on June 26 at the Brooklyn home that she and Eubie have shared since their marriage in 1945. In March, we lost Tom Shea, a North Carolina ragtimer who was the first artist to be recorded by the Ragtime Society (Tom did two LPs in 1963 and 1964).

Our mailbag indicates, however, that our 20th birthday has excited the imaginations of many of our members.

A ragtimer who was at our very first Bash -- in fact, the one that preceded the first official Bash -- is back in our pages to refresh the memories of some who can't quite recall how the Society started, and to explain our unique mandate to others who have joined in recent years. He is, of course, Jack Cuff who was editor of this publication for several years. We have reprinted a major portion of a mini-history which Jack wrote on the occasion of our 10th-anniversary in 1972. It still reads well.

We hope that you've found time to do things:

1 -- Circled the dates of Oct. 22-23-24 for our 20th anniversary Bash at Toronto's Cara Inn.

2 -- Sent us your 1982 membership fee for $8, still one of the best bargains around.

Because this issue combines the March-April and May-June issues, it is bulkier than usual. In the July-August issue, you'll receive an invitation to visit a ragtime museum in Britain and learn about ragtime in Czechoslovakia!

THE RAGTIMER is the official publication of THE RAGTIME SOCIETY Inc. P.O. 520, Station A, Weston, Ontario, Canada, M9N 3N3. All rights of THE RAGTIMER are reserved to the Corporation. Membership is $8.00 per year and includes all issues of THE RAGTIMER published during the current year.

# MARION T. BLAKE

# MEMORIES OF YOU

*Why can't I forget like I should*
*Heavens knows I would if I could,*
*But I just can't keep you off my mind*
*Though you have gone and love was in vain,*
*All around me, you still remain,*
*Wonder why fate should be so unkind.*

*Waking skies, at sunrise,*
*Every sunset too,*
*Seems to be bringing me,*
*Memories of you*
*How I wish I could forget those happy yesteryears,*
*That have left a rosary of tears.*
*Your face beams in my dreams,*
*Spite of all I do.*
*Everything seems to bring,*
*Memories of you*
*Here and there everywhere,*
*Scenes that we once knew*
*And they all, just recall*
*Memories of you.*

We'd all listened to Andy Razaf's lyrics countless times, but sitting there in a church at Lexington and 54th Street in Manhattan the words suddenly had new meaning as we all thought about Marion Blake. The July 6th memorial service at Saint Peter's Church was a tribute to Marion who died at the Blakes's brownstone home in Brooklyn on June 26th.

Sitting in the front row was Luther Henderson who may have been the last person to speak to Marion. Back home after spending a few weeks in hospital, Marion was resting in bed on the afternoon that she suffered a fatal heart attack. She received several telephone calls that day, the last of which came from Luther Henderson at approximately 4:30 p.m. One hour later, a housemaid entered the bedroom and found that Marion had died suddenly and peacefully.

At Marion's request, no funeral service was held. Friends were asked to send contributions to the Eubie Blake Children's Theatre in New York City rather than send flowers, but the front of the Manhattan church was filled with floral tributes anyway. Eubie, who understandably was devastated by the loss of the woman he married Dec. 27, 1945, was not present.

Both Marion and Eubie would have been moved by the presence of many friends who included Cab Calloway, Rudi Blesh, Max Morath, Bill Bolcolm and Joan Morris, Robert Kimball and his wife, Lou and Phoebe Jacobs, George Wein, Elliot Hoffman, Frank Owens and many others whom I did not recognize.

"Everyone here should be eternally grateful to Marion Blake, because she gave us the renaissance of Eubie," said Elliot Hoffman in an eloquent tribute that I wish I had recorded. He recalled how Marion grew up in quite different circumstances than Eubie. (Marion's grandfather, Hiram S. Thomas, a hotelier now best known for inventing the potato chip, once owned the posh Thomas' Rumson Inn in Rumson, New Jersey) When Eubie and Marion met, she had been widowed for approximately six years. Her former husband, Willie Tyler, was a prominent musician who had played with James Reese Europe and with other well-known orchestras. After her marriage to Eubie on Dec. 27, 1945, Marion devoted herself totally to Eubie in a special way that made it possible for him to continue growing as a musician.

"Marion never hurt anyone in her life, or stepped on anyone's toes," said Elliot Hoffman, "but when she decided to do something she never backed down from anything. Especially when it involved Eubie." Marion Blake died in peace, he added, because she felt she had accomplished the biggest project of her later life: ensuring that Eubie's music and papers will be suitably preserved in his home town, Baltimore. "She left nothing to chance, and visited Baltimore to talk with the mayor and others. As a result, we will eventually see the Eubie Blake Cultural Centre, a special project of the City of Baltimore to honour Eubie. And the person we'll have to thank for that is Marion Blake."

So organized a person was Marion that she had left detailed instructions about how the household was to continue at the home she and Eubie shared for three and a half decades. It was according to her instructions that no funeral was held, and that friends were asked to contribute to the Eubie Blake Children's Theatre rather than send flowers.

The program said that Frank Owens would play immediately before the memorial service, but I was surprised to recognize jazz pianist Marion McPartland at the piano, playing several numbers that all escaped my memory. The music that she played was pleasant -- tone poems with overtones of modern jazz -- but I sensed that the audience of Eubie's friends and fellow musicians felt a greater sense of involvement with the music that followed throughout the service and after.

Bill Bolcom and Joan Morris, whom I had last seen at the marvellous Eubie evening in Rochester (January-February Ragtimer), performed two Eubie compositions that could not have been more appropriate. The first was "She's Lucky To Me", which Joan Morris sang with both feeling and classical simplicity. The second was "Dixie Moon" -- and I wish I could mail every reader a tape rather than describe Bill Bolcom's interpretation. The introductory notes, played just as Eubie played the tune at the 1979 Bash, rang out through the church like the triumphant beginning of a hymn of celebration, and Joan Morris's singing reflected the same mood. It was exactly the right interpretation by two artists whom both Eubie and Marion have always considered close friends.

Emme Kemp, a New York pianist who was unknown to me, accompanied singer Mary Louise in "Memories Of You", and I wondered immediately why I had not heard her name. I have played the tune for at least three decades, but I heard things in their moving and sensitive interpretation that I had never heard before. Frank Owens, who had now arrived, played a Eubie composition which no one in the church had ever heard before -- "Blue Thoughts". ("Eubie gave it to me one day, and told me to hang onto it. I thought of it just before the service".) Immediately after the service, Bill Bolcom played the composition that everyone had missed during the service -- "Valse Marion".

A beautiful service for a beautiful lady. We'll miss her.

-- JACK HUTTON

# PLAY IT AGAIN, JACK!

*Many of today's Ragtime Society members have no idea how the Society started in 1962 as the brainchild of a small number of ragtime enthusiasts. The best mini-history ever written about the Society was penned by Jack Cuff in 1972 as the Ragtime Society celebrated 10 years. As a 20th anniversary surprise, we take pleasure in reprinting a major portion of Jack's history in this issue. That's the author at the left.*

For a period of time, our Society moved along side by side with the Ragtime Review of St. Louis which began its quarterly publication Volume 1, Number 1 in January, 1962, largely through the efforts of Trebor Tichenor and the late Russell E. Cassidy. This fine publication continued until the Volume 5, Number 2 issue for April, 1966. Russ wrote a touching last chorus as he spoke of his sickness and inability to continue. He also expressed his own realization that Trebor could not carry on alone with the publication. Russ still had a devotion to the Ragtime Cause and even though he could not carry on he did not want to see readers deprived of ragtime news. In his closing editorial, he put it this way: "I would like to make a modest plea for your support of THE RAGTIME SOCIETY, Box 8, King, Ontario, Canada. Since they will be your only source of Ragtime Information, they will need all the support you can give them."

On July 4th, 1966, Russ died in Denver but not before he had sent along to our Society, The Ragtime Review files of unpublished material including a biography of Joseph Lamb written by Russ in 1961. That biography became a tribute to the memory of Russ Cassidy in our Society's Newsletter Volume 5, Number 4, 1966. When I attended the 7th Annual National Ragtime Festival at St. Louis in June, 1971, I discussed the fate of The Ragtime Review with Trebor Tichenor. We both agreed that the material published in The Ragtime Review over its 4 ½ year lifetime should not be lost. Trebor readily gave his consent, on behalf of that publication, to our Society for reprinting rights in the future.

Another development over those years was the formation in May, 1967, of The Maple Leaf Club at Los Angeles. In the same month Volume 1, Number 1 of the Rag Times was published as a single letter sheet. Since then The Maple Leaf Club has flourished as a parallel organization to our own with a polished and informative bi-monthly magazine.

Events of the last two years have generated a wider interest in the musical works of Scott Joplin. Recording artists playing ragtime piano leaned heavily on the compositions of Joplin. The publication in 1971 of Joplin's collected works by the New York Public Library under the editorial guidance of Vera Brodsky Lawrence increased interest still further in Scott Joplin as an American composer of note. Concerts of special significance directed even more attention to the importance of Joplin as a composer.

Late in 1971, the New York Public Library performing arts division sponsored a Joplin concert when excerpts of his 1911 opera "Treemonisha" and other compositions were performed. Then came the major presentation of the opera in January, 1972, at Atlanta. The opera "Treemonisha" was again performed in August, 1972, at Wolf Trap Farm Park near Washington, D.C.

## INCORPORATION OF THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

Turning inward then, it is pleasant to review a period of unbroken progress since 1962. Perhaps the most important impact on our Society was its incorporation on June 30th, 1970, as a non-profit corporation. Having decided on incorporation, Mr. John B. Lawson of the law firm of McCarthy and McCarthy was retained to carry through with the legal aspects. The applicants for incorporation on behalf of THE RAGTIME SOCIETY and as first directors were Jack Aldred, Anne Arpin, John Arpin, Jean Cuff, Jack Cuff, John Fairhead, Idamay MacInnes and Baron McCormick. All the required financial and related statements were prepared by Jack Aldred in his professional capacity as chartered accountant.

Following receipt of Letters Patent issued by the Province of Ontario several meetings were held, resulting in execution of the first By-laws, the election of officers, the passing of a banking resolution and the appointment of auditors. The first officers elected for the 1970-71 term were John Arpin, President, John Fairhead, Secretary, and Idamay MacInnes, Treasurer.

## HOW IT ALL BEGAN

The first meeting of record of THE RAGTIME SOCIETY, resulting in its formation, was held on January 19th, 1962, at the Toronto home of Mr. and Mrs. Allen MacInnes.

Interest in the revival of Ragtime had been slowly growing in Toronto for a few years prior to the founding of the Society. The research and writings of Rudi Blesh and the late Harriet Janis had resulted in the publication in 1950 of their book "They All Played Ragtime". This work had become and remains the definitive history of Ragtime. Their discovery that Joseph Lamb was still alive returned Joe to prominence as a composer of Ragtime. Folkway Records produced an album played by Joe at his Brooklyn home in August, 1959. The album title was "Joseph Lamb: A Study in Classic Ragtime."

The banner of the Ragtime Revival was firmly planted in Toronto in 1959 with the arrival of Robert "Ragtime Bob" Darch and his Cornish Upright Grand Five Pedal Saloon Piano at the opening of the new Club 76. It was due to Bob's efforts that Joe Lamb returned in triumph to Toronto where Joe's initial efforts as a composer, Celestine Waltzes, were first published by Harry H. Sparks. Joe died the following year on September 3rd, 1960.

Club 76 became the regular meeting place of Ragtime Devotees. Visits by the already legendary Eubie Blake and a versatile Max Morath, and the accomplished Johnny Maddox added fire to the ragtime revival in Toronto. As a booster of ragtime there was no one to be found who was more enthusiastic than Bob Darch. His famous remark "Ragtime dead? Hell it ain't even been sick!" was far from being an anachronism in Toronto.

The small group which later formed THE RAGTIME SOCIETY soon fell under the spell of ragtime and its classical overtones. Then there were the repeated urgings of Darch, as he regularly returned to the club to perform and talk about ragtime, that something should be done to find, preserve and further promote the music. The search commenced. Contacts through correspondence began to increase. Long forgotten ragtime sheet music and piano rolls were being re-discovered with increasing frequency.

Toward the end of 1961, the casual and informal discussions of three couples, Mr. and Mrs. John Fisher, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Kinnear and Mr. and Mrs. Allen MacInnes, began to crystallize into the desirability of forming a society devoted to Ragtime.

## THE SOCIETY IS FOUNDED

We move then to that eventual meeting of January 19th, 1962. Those present were John and Mary Fisher, Jim and the late Holly Kinnear, and Allen and Idamay MacInnes. It was their decision that the new organization be called "THE RAGTIME SOCIETY" and that its purpose was best described by the words "Dedicated To The Preservation Of Classic Ragtime." These appellations have survived the test of time. Officers were named. John Fisher became Chairman, Jim Kinnear was named Secretary and Idamay MacInnes became Treasurer. Because Jim Kinnear lived near King, Ontario, the first address of the Society became P.O. Box 8, King, Ontario, Canada. The most important effect of that meeting was the founding of a lasting Society.

It was decided to send out a promotional letter to ragtimers already known through contact and correspondence and to other persons believed to be interested in ragtime. Accordingly, a letter dated January, 1962, was sent out over the signature of John A. Fisher as Chairman. The following is a quotation of the opening paragraphs of that historic letter.

> "As it states on our letterhead, the aim of the Ragtime Society is the preservation of Classic Ragtime. Towards this end we hope to do everything reasonable to bring as much information and music as we can on Ragtime to the attention of the enthusiast and to the person who wants to learn about Ragtime.
>
> "This music is not jazz; it is not Honky-Tonk; or Ricky-Tick. It is not an improvised style of a few professional entertainers. Classic Ragtime is the piano music composed by relatively few people, most of them from Missouri, and played in North America during the period 1897-1917.
>
> "We are writing to you as we feel you may be interested in becoming part of this Society ..."

In the following month the first official newsletter to members was issued by the Society and is known as Volume 1, Number 1 -- February, 1962. The newsletter began with the sentence, "It is very gratifying to find so many Canadians and Americans interested in Classic Ragtime." That newsletter listed all the known publications, sheet music and records then available commercially. It spoke of plans to reprint Classic Ragtime sheet music in public domain and of a desire to reproduce piano rolls. Piano rolls were sold by the Society for a period of time, but it proved impractical to proceed with their reproduction. It was discovered that ragtime rolls were available commercially. Reissue rolls were also available from privately-cut sources.

The second newsletter dealt with the subject of performers and discussed the activities of certain surviving originals and present day professional pianists associated with ragtime. The list then consisted of Eubie Blake, Luckeyeth Roberts, Joe Jordan, Bob Darch, Max Morath, Wally Rose, Johnny Maddox and Trebor Tichenor. The newsletter also paid tribute to the late Joseph Lamb. Soon after, a Joseph Lamb memorial concert took place at Massey Hall in Toronto on May 4, 1962, with Robert Darch and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra performing the composer's music to a capacity audience of more than 2,500 persons.

## THE EARLY YEARS

From the beginning it was apparent that the Society had a role to play and that it was filling a need as evinced by its rapid growth. By the end of 1962, the Society had reprinted 10 otherwise unavailable rags on the basis of one per month as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Original Rags - Joplin | Mississippi Rag - Krell |
| Elite Syncopations - Joplin | Sensation Rag - Lamb |
| Sunflower Slow Drag - Joplin/Hayden | Harlem Rag - Turpin |
| Frog Legs Rag - Scott | Swipesey - Joplin/Marshall |
| St. Louis Rag - Turpin | Live Wires Rag - Shepherd |

In the following year, 1963, a big boost was given to the preservation of Classic Ragtime with the publication of "100 Ragtime Classics Selected by Max Morath" by Donn Printing Company Inc. of Denver. This book has since become a collector's item. Along with the publication by Melrose of 34 Ragtime Classics, the immediate demand for reprinted ragtime music became temporarily satisfied. The Society then took on its first LP recording project - RSR-01 "Classic and Modern Rags" played by Tom Shea. The record was so favorably acclaimed that plans began for more recordings. Chairman John Fisher served the membership well as editor of the monthly newsletter through the first two years of the Society's existence. But before he withdrew from active participation the period ended with the reprinting of "Maple Leaf Rag" photographed from the first edition of 1899, including the original cover.

1964 became a sad year for Jim Kinnear and his two sons with the loss of Holly, a wife and mother, who died on August 13th following a lengthy illness. Holly had given her support as long as she could to the Society. In 1964 and 1965 Jim carried on with the newsletter virtually alone at first and then gained increasing assistance from Bob Ashforth who became editor late in 1964. Reprinting of individual rags continued into 1964 but a new form of proceeding came with the introduction of the first music reprint chapter.

A big project started by the Society in 1964 was the limited edition reprinting plans of Scott Joplin's 234-page opera in Three Acts "Treemonisha". It would mean the first time to become available again since the original printing in 1911 at Scott Joplin's own expense. It was not until 1966, due to the help of John Hill who took charge of the Treemonisha project after a long period of uncertainty, that the reprinted opera was finally ready for distribution.

A second important happening of the year, 1964, was the holding of the first Society "Bash" in December at the home of Jim Kinnear which was named "The Red Carpet Saloon" for the occasion. While Jim's P.O. address was King, Ontario, his residence was located in a community area known as Temperanceville. Hence the event was publicized as likely to be the most memorable "Bash" since the repeal of prohibition. The annual event has been changed in locale many times since, but the original descriptive term "Bash", started in fun, has stuck through the years. During 1964, Tom Shea recorded his second record for the Society "Prairie Ragtime". This was followed in 1965 by arrangements with John Arpin for his ragtime recording "Concert In Ragtime".

## THE MIDDLE YEARS OF CHANGE

During 1965, John Fairhead began giving Bob Ashforth and Jim Kinnear a hand with the newsletter. John Arpin had begun to take an active interest in the affairs of the Society. He became Chairman in 1966, filling a position that had remained vacant following the retirement of John Fisher at the end of 1963. During 1966, a fine recording was produced by the Society called "Ragtime Down The Line", capturing the ragtime style of Charlie Rasch. As previously stated, a completion of the "Treemonisha" project was realized. A study was started with a view to replacing the newsletter with a magazine format. Dick Flohil provided his expertise in the considerations. By the end of 1966, the Society suffered the loss of another of its founders from active participation, in the person of Jim Kinnear, along with the added loss of Bob Ashforth.

It is to the lasting credit of hard-working members like John Fisher, Jim Kinnear and Bob Ashforth and later Dick Flohil, Anne Arpin, Baron McCormick and Jack Aldred that in retiring from active duty, their efforts in each case carried the Society's development to a progressively higher plateau. The Society will always be indebted to them for their help.

As the Society entered the year 1967 the current change of address to P.O. Box 520, Weston, Ontario, was made from the previous address at King. John Arpin continued as Chairman, Idamay MacInnes remained Treasurer and John Fairhead was appointed Secretary. Dick Flohil served as editor of the first two issues of the magazine which replaced the newsletter. With the magazine came the present-day name of the Society's publication, "THE RAGTIMER". Regular magazine departments were established, using the help of Roger Hankins, Tom Shea and later Tex Wyndham as contributing editors. Following completion of the initial conversion work undertaken by Dick Flohil the job of editor was then shared by John Arpin and John Fairhead. Another added feature of identification for the Society at the beginning of this period was the introduction of our popular logo "The Ragtime Society Hat". This was the work of Jack Thompson.

At the beginning of 1968 our present-day cover design of THE RAGTIMER was used for the first time. The artist was again Jack Thompson (Chief Designer of New Center Studios in Detroit). Because it was found that the magazine format had become much too costly to produce, Volume 7, Number 1, being the first issue of THE RAGTIMER in 1968, was also the last of the magazine series.

## INCORPORATION

During 1970, discussions began at executive meetings, under the chairmanship of John Arpin, as to the merits of seeking incorporation for the Society. It was a time of vigorous debate and prolonged study. Legal advice was sought. In the result, Incorporation became effective as of June 30th, 1970, followed by an official announcement in THE RAGTIMER of Jan/Feb 1971.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Let's tabulate some of the accomplishments that have provided service to our far-flung membership. In 1972, Society members are located in five Provinces of Canada, 34 States of the U.S.A., eight European countries, with a scattering of members in the Caribbean, Africa and as far away as Asia and Australia.

| LP RECORDS | | RELEASED |
|---|---|---|
| **Society Produced Records** | | |
| RSR-01 | Classic and Modern Rags - Tom Shea | 1963 |
| RSR-02 | Prairie Ragtime - Tom Shea | 1964 |
| RSR-04 | Ragtime Down The Line - Charlie Rasch | 1966 |
| **COOPERATIVELY PRODUCED RECORDS** | | |
| RSR-03 | Concert in Ragtime (Scroll) - John Arpin | 1965 |
| RSR-06 | The Other Side Of Ragtime (Scroll) - John Arpin | 1966 |
| RSR-08 | The Music Of Joe Jordan (Arpeggio)-Lois Delano | 1968 |
| **Independently Produced Records** | | |
| RSR-05 | Mississippi Valley Ragtime(Scroll)- Trebor Tichenor | 1966 |
| RSR-07 | The Entertainer (Arpeggio) - Max Morath | 1968 |

| MUSIC REPRINT CHAPTERS | YEAR | No. of REPRINTS |
|---|---|---|
| Chapter No. 1 | 1964-65 | 18 |
| Chapter No. 11 | 1965-66 | 24 |
| Chapter No. 111 | 1967 | 24 |
| Chapter No. 1V | 1967-68 | 24 |
| Chapter No. V | 1969 | 24 |
| Chapter No. VI | 1970 | 24 |
| Chapter No. VII | 1972 | 24 |

Prior to the introduction of the Music Reprint Chapters, reprints were produced on an individual basis in the period 1962 to 1964 for a total of 23 rags.

BASHES

The names listed under each bash is my attempt to recall the first occasion a particular performer attended and took part officially in the proceedings. Many of them have attended all or most of the later bashes. For example, Eubie Blake came to the 3rd annual bash and has not missed one since. (EDITOR: for the record, Eubie last appeared at the Bash in 1979 after missing several years)

Introductory Bash - Home of Jim Kinnear - King, Ont. Dec. 12, 1964
(The night of the memorable fog) (The Red Carpet Saloon)
Bonnie Roberts, Don Burns, Gale Foehner, Tom Shea, Walt Gower, Bill Chestnut, host Jim Kinnear Sr., Jim Kinnear Jr., at age 16, Bob Kinnear at age 12, Idamay MacInnes and Jack Cuff.

1st Annual Bash - Home of Jim Kinnear - King, Ont. Feb. 20, 1965
(The Red Carpet Saloon)
John Arpin, Bob Darch, John Cossar and Cathy Faulkner

2nd Annual Bash - Home of John Arpin - Weston, Ont. June 18, 1966
Max Morath, Bob Seeley, Charlie Rasch, and other band personnel

3rd Annual Bash - Home of Ken Vinen - Port Hope, Ont. Aug. 26, 1967
(The Little Red Schoolhouse)
Eubie Blake, Trebor Tichenor, author Rudi Blesh and host Ken Vinen.

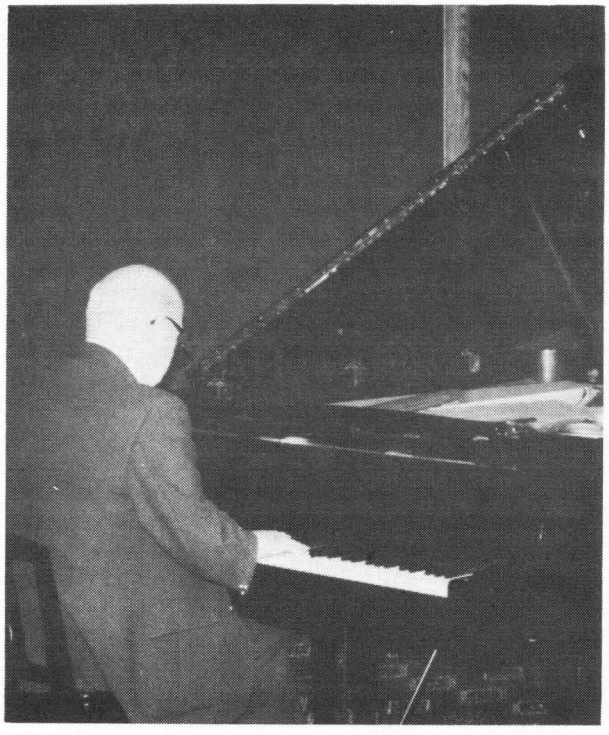
4th Annual Bash - St. Jude's Church Hall - Weston, Ont. July 27, 1968
Tex Wyndham, Mike Montgomery, Kathi Backus, Eli Kaufman, Olive Brown, and Magic by Baron McCormick

5th Annual Bash - Bayview Golf and Country Club - Toronto Nov. 1, 1969
Henry Cuesta, David Jasen, Kerry Price (Gower), "Sister Kate" Ross, Dick Saunders, Bob Fertig, Gary Webeck and Bud Taylor

6th Annual Bash - York University - Toronto, Ont. Oct. 24, 1970
(Glendon College)
Merrywilliams Newland, Peter Harrison, Jeff Grossman, Roger Hankins, Dave Flowitt, Bob Boury, Mike Schwimmer, Bill Albright, Betty Redelsheimer, David Fleury at age 15, and Gordon Sheard, also at age 15

7th Annual Bash - Cara Inn - Toronto, Ont. Nov. 6, 1971
Gerry Vondy, Tom Noel, Phil Stock, Harvey Roehl, Russell Stettler, Ben Conroy and Tony Hagert

8th Annual Bash - Cara Inn - Toronto, Ont. Oct 14, 1972
Don Ewell, Ian Fisher, Michael Robinson, Milt Davis Ron Davis at age 14, Austin Kitchen, Jack Phelan, Paul Klinger, Ralph Grugel and John McLeod



*Here's part of what Jack Cuff said in his conclusion in 1972: "The ragtime era began 75 years ago. It was in 1897 that ragtime quietly made its first meaningful appearance as a new and distinctively different kind of music. The music first found acceptance at the lower end of the social scale... Even today in 1972 the 75th birthday anniversary of ragtime passes by with little if any attention from the world at large.*

*"The Society is dedicated to the proposition that pure ragtime of quality has an established and ongoing classical musical form of its own. Stated arbitrarily, ragtime is not a static music of historical interest alone. For 75 years, ragtime has survived and developed on its own merits, through the works of several generations of composers.*

*"We can be justly proud of our Society in our anniversary year, knowing that the Society, through its members, has made an important and leading contribution to the preservation and development of ragtime."*

# RAGTIME BASH

## WHEN?

THE WEEKEND OF OCTOBER

22-23-24

(Friday night, Saturday and Sunday)

## WHERE?

THE CARA INN

6275 Airport Road

(Reservations will be accepted at any time)

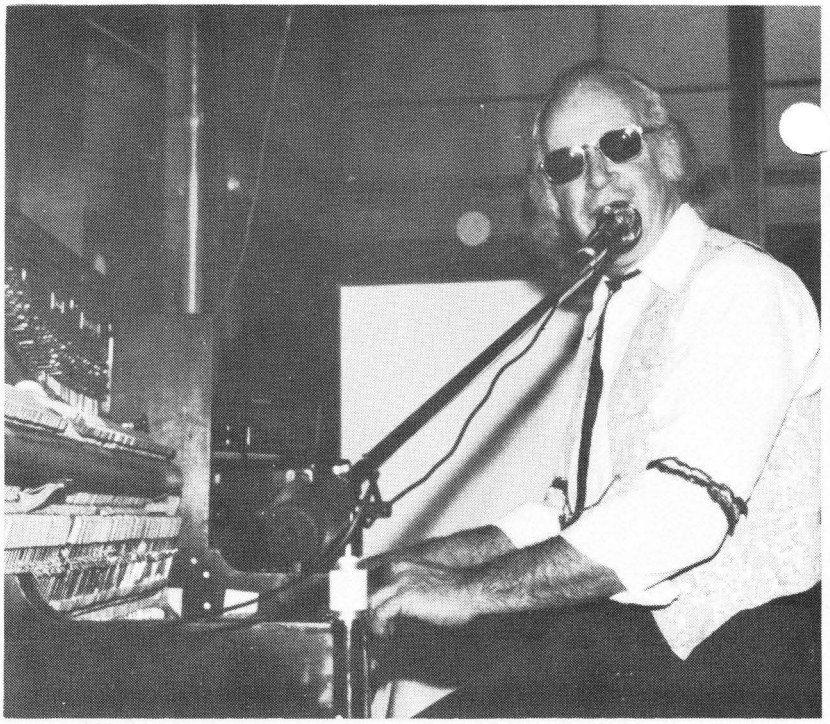
Single: $52
Double: $62

Cost of the Bash dinner remains $25.00 -- a bargain in inflationary times!

## *IT'S OUR TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY!*

An exclusive report on

# *HOW RAGTIME BOB DARCH BECAME A TUNE DETECTIVE FOR YOKO ONO*



**By Jack Hutton**

It has to be the zaniest ragtime story of this century, even if you have read very little about it. The publishers of "Making Whoopee", the 1928 standard by Gus Kahn and Walter Donaldson, have filed a copyright infringement suit against Yoko Ono, charging that she and John Lennon used part of the "Whoopee" tune for the last album they produced. Who did Yoko Ono turn to for help? None other than our Ragtime Bob Darch.

A ragtimer helping out the world of the Beatles? Truth is stranger than fiction, because that is exactly what has happened in the last six months as Darch has literally crossed the continent in search of old tunes with anything close to the opening bars of "Whoopee".

This will have to be a two-part report that leaves you hanging in suspense (something I ordinarily hate) because some of Darch's research should not appear in print before a court date which is expected to be early this fall in a Los Angeles court.

For me, the story began this January when Darch appeared in Toronto to play at the Chicken Deli East. I braved a snowstorm one night in hopes of hearing about a Scandinavian tour that Darch had just finished, but the gravel-voiced pianist seemed preoccupied by something else.

"Have you got a copy of 'Sleepy Hollow Rag', or do you know where you can lay hands on one?" he asked abruptly.

Figuring that Darch wanted to expand or refresh his repertoire, I called Marjory Wittmann, the always efficient Ragtime Society lady who operates the Society's reprint service. Hours later, I picked up the music and was back to present Darch with the music at the end of his next set.

He turned immediately to the trio of Clarence Woods's 1918 rag and began humming. "Just what I thought," he exclaimed. "That's the opening of 'Whoopee'. Listen to those opening bars."

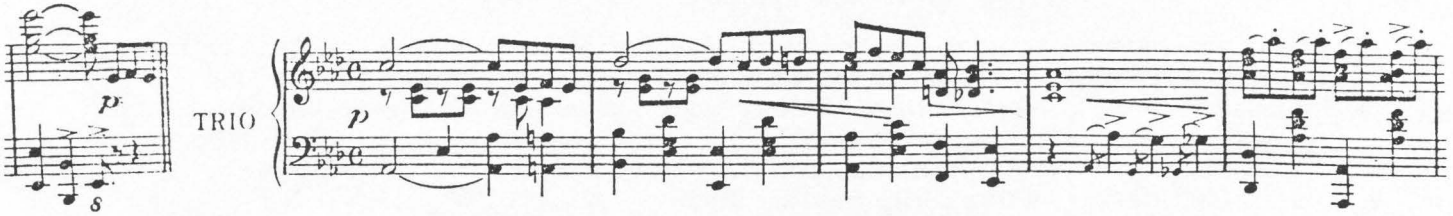
In the next half hour, I finally learned what was going on. The "Whoopee" publishers listened to "I'm Your Angel" on the best-selling Yoko Ono-John Lennon Double Fantasy album and claimed $1 million in punitive damages plus injunctions that would prevent marketing of the song in any form. One of the West Coast lawyers preparing Yoko Ono's defence asked musician friends to suggest someone who probably knew more old tunes than anyone else in North America. "Find a guy called Ragtime Bob Darch. If anyone can help you, he can," they replied.

As a ragtime writer, I was totally fascinated. Nowhere in the brief reports I'd read was there anything about Darch's role in the copyright controversy. Nor was there anything in depth about the complexities of proving that one composer had consciously or unconsciously cribbed part of someone else's music. I contacted The Toronto Star about writing an exclusive report for them, and then found that I was hooked in the research as well.

The more one looked back in the files, the more one discovered that lawyers have made almost more money than musicians, either through challenging a hit tune or defending it against the charge of copyright infringement. In 1980, for example, Walt Disney Productions was challenged by someone who said he had written Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah in 1939 and wanted $10 million plus 5 percent ownership of Disney Productions to salve his hurt feelings. Earlier, Disney was again on the receiving end when two songwriters claimed that they wrote the original music for Supercalifragilistic-expialidocious and wanted $12 million in damages. It cost me close to $50 in cross-continent calls to eventually learn that both cases were thrown out of court. Not so lucky, of course, was Beatle George Harrison who was found guilty of "subconsciously" copying an earlier tune, "He's So Fine", in his 1970 tune, "My Sweet Lord". Harrison had to pay $587,000 in damages.

My report in The Toronto Star brought a small avalanche of mail from readers who wanted to share their favorite copyright stories. "This brings to mind a similar instance," wrote one Toronto reader. "It's the pronounced similarity between parts of Paul Simon's song, 'Still Crazy After All These Years' and the predominant theme of the second movement of Mendelssohn's 'Violin Concerto in E Minor, Opus 64'."

"The theme in question is the melody line over which the words 'still crazy after all these years' themselves are sung. Since the title of the song is set to this melody, comprising the hook from which the song is sung, it is essential the function of the piece.

In the Mendelssohn work, it is apparent that this same melody is the thematic basis on which the entire movement is constructed. This theme is repeatedly foreshadowed and occurs, with varying degrees of ornamentation, many times within the movement."

*The trio of Clarence Woods' "Sleepy Hollow Rag" begins this way*

By this time, Darch was now talking about a tune even earlier than "Sleepy Hollow Rag" -- "New Coon In Town", written by ragtimer J.S. Putnam and published in 1883. And the calls between him and the West Coast were piling up.

"Three bars don't seem like very much," sighed a lawyer in one conversation. "Isn't there anything around that has more of that tune? After all, how many popular compositions have been published in the last 100 or 150 years? There must be some tune somewhere or other that will help us."

You wondered where Ragtime Bob Darch was playing last winter? The fact is that for several weeks he wasn't playing anywhere. Instead, he lived on the airlines, blitzing old sheet music stores for a day or two at a time before moving on. And, constantly, he was on the phone talking to ragtime contacts, both on this continent and in Europe. Bob Darch, the ragtime pianist and historian, had become Bob Darch the musical detective in the pay of Yoko Ono and her defence lawyers.

"Have you found it yet?" the lawyers asked repeatedly as they answered Darch's calls from yet another part of the continent. Each time they were reassured that the search was getting closer.

The trail eventually led to the Franx Antique Store in Omaha, Nebraska, where Darch asked permission to personally sift through several boxes of old, dusty sheet music, some of it so old that it was literally falling apart. Days later, Darch had looked through several boxes without accomplishing anything more than looking like a chimney sweep ("I was going through several baths a day," he says). He had come to the last box and was trying to decide where to go next as he reached for the last piece of music.

The title was almost cornier than anything he had seen in his entire search, but he opened the music anyway. And suddenly he forgot about how dirty his hands had become in the previous hour.

"Are you sitting down?" he asked his West Coast lawyer contact moments after he had returned to his hotel. "I think I have some news for you."

*TUNE IN LATER: No, we didn't tell you the name of the last tune in that dusty box because some things must remain in confidence until the "Whoopee" trial actually takes place. As we went to press, there was a strong possibility that the trial might be held in September, which means we will bring you up date in the Ragtimer issue which follows that date. Tune in for our next instalment in which Bob Darch follows composer Aaron Copeland clear across the continent and in which an aging New York clergyman provides important clues.*

## Don't hesitate to write

**If you have an opinion you'd like to share after reading the articles, or if you just have an opinion about ragtime, don't hesitate to drop a line to the Ragtimer. Several readers have already taken advantage of the publication to search for rags that they can't find in their local areas. Editor Jack Hutton eagerly awaits any contributions, and promises to repay any contributors with a suitable libation at this fall's Ragtime Bash.**

# TOM SHEA

*The Ragtime Society lost a link with its past when Tom Shea, the first ragtime pianist to be recorded by the Society, died at his home in Raleigh, North Carolina, on March 12. Mike Montgomery, a fellow ragtimer and close friend, wrote this sensitive tribute which we are pleased to share with you.*

Having just turned 48 myself, I'm not prepared to see close friends and contemporaries like Tom Shea die. But then, Tom Shea wasn't prepared for what happened, either.

Tom, an accomplished pianist, began composing his own rags on the piano in the early 1960's. At the time, most of us ragophiles were busy searching for the old rags that had already been composed 50 to 60 years earlier, then trying to learn how they sounded.

Tom's rags included the famous Brun Campbell Express, Spasm Rag, Prairie Queen, The Storyville Sport and 10 others which he recorded on the first two LP's produced by the Ragtime Society of Canada. He recorded these near Toronto in 1963 and 1964. While living in the Detroit area, he also co-founded Mother's Boys, a traditional jazz band which also recorded two LP's.

After moving to Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1970, he continued to compose new rags and he helped start a similar band called the Capitol City Jazz Band. In 1974 this group began calling itself the Carolina Footwarmers; in 1976 it became Captain Saylor's Plantation Orchestra; finally, in 1979, the band members called themselves the Okeh Jazz Band. The Okeh band played one of its regular jobs at the North Carolina State University Faculty Club on March 13, 1982, but Tom didn't show. It wasn't until the next day that they knew why. Tom was already dead of a massive heart attack -- a "coronary".

The official date of death is Friday, March 12, 1982, and Tom died either late that night or early in the morning on March 13th. His mother, Winifred Shea, believes he died on the 13th, an especially sad date for her because that's the date that Tom's father, Harry J. Shea, died in Mattoon, Illinois, in the mid-1950's, at age 51.

If you believe, as I do, in the idea that a male's mortality is, to a large extent, inherited, then Harry Shea's untimely death -- of a heart attack and other complications -- may have been the single most important predictor of Tom's own fate. This means that if Tom had not died when he did, it might have happened anyway in a few months.

This is the only explanation that satisfies me because Tom, on the outside, was a picture of health. He gave up cigarettes years ago, and for the past two years he bicycled and jogged regularly for exercise, and he watched his diet carefully. He succeeded in getting rid of his pot belly but, frankly, if he ever had one I never noticed it. (It certainly didn't hold a candle to my own well-developed one or to others I know of in the ragtime/jazz world) Maybe Tom's interest in physical fitness was his way of trying to forestall what he, too, may have sensed was inevitable.

## WHAT HAPPENED

Tom worked for the Burroughs Wellcome Company since 1956 and moved his family (wife Margaret and daughters Robin and Julie) from Detroit to Raleigh, N.C., in 1970. (That's when the firm moved there from Tuckahoe, N.Y., to establish new headquarters in more spacious surroundings) Tom's job in Raleigh was sales training manager.

Tom's daughter, Robin Shea Foreman, lives with her husband, Art, in nearby Winston-Salem, N.C., and delivered her first baby, Thomas M. Foreman, on March 2nd. Tom and Margaret drover over to see the baby right away, and he got to hold the baby during this visit. During the week of March 8, Tom had to attend business meetings in Washington, D.C., and Chicago, so while he was out of town, Margaret also left the house so she could be with Robin and the new grandchild.

Tom returned home from Chicago on Friday, March 12th about 10:00 p.m. He mentioned to co-workers that he didn't feel well on the flight back to Raleigh, but everyone was tired from the round of promotional meetings, and this didn't seem unusual under the circumstances.

A limousine service dropped Tom off at his house, and this was the last time anyone saw him alive. The events of the next few hours apparently went like this:

He put his bags at the foot of the stairs, opened and read the mail and ate some crackers and cheese. He also lay down on the living room couch because of the way one of the pillows had been re-arranged. He must have felt additional chest discomfort because he went upstairs, turned on an electric heating pad and lay down on the bed on top of the pad. What happened next isn't certain, but when Margaret returned home Sunday about noon, expecting to spend some time with him before he had to leave town that day for more meetings, this is how she found him. The heating pad was still on.

Margaret called her brother, Jim Huber, in Connecticut, and Jim called Joe Knollenberg, a Mattoon friend who lives here in Southfield. Joe then called me Sunday night. I began phoning key people among Tom's ragtime acquaintances. And many of those I called called others. Many people helped spread the word quickly because the family received a multitude of magnificent floral tributes.

I didn't think about sending flowers myself. Instead I decided to attend Tom's services, so I flew down to Raleigh on Tuesday afternoon.

## TOM'S SECONDARY FAMILY

Though I had known Tom since 1962, I had never met any of his co-workers until Charlie Singler met me at the airport and invited me to stay with him and his wife, Cynthia, for the night. En route to Charlie's we stopped by the BW (Burroughs Wellcome) headquarters where I got to meet several of Tom's other associates from this unusual family. I say "family" advisedly because in Raleigh the BW managers traditionally interact off-the-job as well as on. Many came as strangers to the Raleigh area in 1970 and it was natural for them to form social bonds as they settled into their new environment. Tom and Margaret Shea developed many close BW friends, and I know these warm people will play a major role in helping Margaret adjust to the future.

## TOM'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY

My presence may not have comforted Tom's immediate family as much as his family managed to comfort me. The best part was getting to know Tom's mother whom I met for the first time. I felt at home with her from the start, partly because I had two great aunts called Winifred, and it's a name that's relatively uncommon these days. Winifred Shea also made me feel at home because she is a warm, attractive lady who is very easy to talk to. A spry 75, she still works for the Mattoon doctor she has been serving for the last 25 years, and she has no plans to stop. She told me that Tom, an only child, took private piano lessons (under protest) from the Catholic sisters in Mattoon, after school, until he finished the eighth grade. While Winifred wasn't musical herself, she said that her mother was the musical one. It was Tom's grandmother who helped him work through his exercises when he practised.

Tom's first cousin, Mary Jane Jemsek, and her daughter, Gina, accompanied Winifred Shea on the trip from Mattoon, and many of Margaret's family managed to be on hand, too.

## THE SERVICES

Margaret asked me to be one of the pallbearers. The others were Terry George and Joe Whitehead (both long-time friends from BW), Garth Quinn (a BW retiree and the man who hired Tom in the first place in 1956; he's also the guitar player in the Okeh Jazz Band), Bob Corder (the Okeh's drummer), and Art Foreman, Tom and Margaret's son-in-law.

For the record, the funeral arrangements were handled by the Brown-Wynne Funeral Home on East Millbrook Road, and a funeral mass was held at St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church at 11:00 a.m. on March 17th. The church, of course, was full. Before the services began the organist played Joplin's The Entertainer on a piano that had been specially delivered for the purpose. At one point during the mass the organist also played, somewhat haltingly, a number Tom wrote for Margaret in 1980. The priest announced it as the Carolina Rag but you can hear it the way Tom played it (as Mag's Rag) on a new LP that Tom recorded last September and soon to be released on Stomp Off Records in York, Pa. The service also included the group-singing of the well-known hymns, Faith of Our Fathers and Amazing Grace.

A long line of cars with headlights on then headed into downtown Raleigh, to historic Oakwood Cemetery. Oakwood is Raleigh's oldest burial ground and contains the remains of several state governors and confederate heroes. Tom's grave is in the center of a new area of the cemetery. The Shea plot seems to be the only one in about a quarter of an acre of land, on a slightly sloping hill.

March 17th was a beautiful, pre-Spring day, with bright sunshine, green grass, soft ground and flowering shrubs, all of which helped ward off the sadness. At my suggestion, the priest included the Irish blessing at the graveside services. It was, after all, St. Patrick's Day, and Tom <u>was</u> Irish. The blessing goes like this:

May the road rise to meet you
May the wind be always at your back
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
the rains fall soft upon your fields,
and until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

WHAT ABOUT A MEMORIAL?

Tom's family has not yet designated a charity or fund to which friends may send contributions in his memory, so I have the following suggestions. To me, Tom's most important legacy is his music. To ensure that Tom's talent and creativity continue to influence -- and be enjoyed by -- generations to come, it's imperative that Tom's recordings and the sheet music of his compositions be kept in print and available to all interested parties. His newest LP will be available soon, as I have said, but his first two LP's could be re-issued by The Ragtime Society if they get an expression of demand. Therefore, if you are interested in seeing these LP's in print again, write directly to: The Ragtime Society, P.O. Box 520, Station A, Weston, Ontario, Canada M9N 3N3.

Eventually, small Tom Shea archives could be donated to appropriate libraries at a number of institutions, such as the Mattoon, Raleigh and Detroit Public Libraries, as well as those at North Carolina State University (Raleigh) and at Eastern Illinois State University at Charleston, Illinois (Tom's alma mater). The archives could consist of his LP's and sheet music.

For those who wish to communicate with Tom's wife and mother, here are their addresses. I know they will appreciate your memories of Tom and your condolences.

Margaret Shea, 6700 Brookhollow Dr., Raleigh, NC 27609

Winifred Shea, 3312 Western Ave., Mattoon, Illinois 61938

# *Ragtime Mailbag*

"I like the stapled (Ragtimer) copies with the holes punched in them for easy filing. Reference could be made easier if we had a year-end index of subjects and a list of ragtime solos printed therein. I also like the idea of printing one of the more rare, obscure and hard-to-get ragtime solos in each edition.

"I was able to attend only one Bash several years ago and it was terrific! Due to contractual agreements, I'm unable to attend. My summer contract doesn't end till the first of November.

"Another note re the footnote at the end of your article on Dick Hyman, the complete works of Scott Joplin and also Jelly Roll Morton were recorded by John W. "Knocky" Parker on Audiophile Records, San Antonio, Texas.

"Finally, I'd like to find someone who would sell me a copy of "Russian Rag' . I'm not looking for collector's items. Even Xerox copies will do."

Ed Greenberg, P.O. Box 673,
Homosassa Springs, Florida 32647

# RECORD REVIEW

by
TEX
WYNDHAM

Stomp Off SOS 1012 "Jungle Blues", piano solos by Ray Smith

Selections: Bert Williams, Fickle Fay Creep, California Stomp, Freakish, High Society, Sweet Peter, Fat Frances, Foolin' Around, Sidewalk Blues, Mortonitis, Kinklets, Pep, Jungle Blues, Takin' It Easy.

Available @ $8.98 postpaid (plus $2.00 overseas) from Stomp Off Records, 549 Fairview Terrace, York, Pennsylvania 17403.

Most of this Lp was waxed at one sitting on March 14, 1981, which may explain why many of the improvised choruses rely on the same somewhat overworked collection of Jelly Roll Mortonish licks, and why portions of the material seem tired and lifeless ("Sweet Peter" especially). However, Smith largely overcomes these deficiences with the aid of an exceptionally well-chosen program: eight Morton compositions, mostly nearly-forgotten works of particularly high quality and breadth ("Pep" contains influences of novelty rag, "Fat Frances" -- Harlem stride, "Jungle Blues" -- down-and-dirty funk, etc.); four Smith originals, in a Jellyish vein (the jingling "Mortonitis" and the driving "Takin' It Easy" of special merit); plus "High Society" (uninspired and messy) and "Kinklets" (brilliant, high-kicking performance, making you wish he'd included more midwestern classic rags on the bill). Interpretation is at a uniform hard-hitting volume producing a big piano-roll sound, and, except for "Jungle Blues", all on the brisk-paced side of the ledger, developing, when everything else falls into place, some exhilarating rides -- e.g. "Bert Williams", "Fat Frances", "Mortonitis" and "Kinklets". A worthy enough solo debut from an artist whose previous recordings have been with jazz bands (Ken Colyer and Steve Lane), especially if you lean toward Morton or toward percussive, punchy ragtime.

Euphonic ESR-1222 "Old Fashioned Love: A Tribute to James P. Johnson", piano solos by Jim Turner

Selections: Carolina Shout, If I Could Be With You, Fascination, The Charleston, Blue Turning Grey Over You, Jersey Sweet, Liza, Snowy Morning Blues, Medley(Beautiful Love, Old Fashioned Love), Keep Off The Grass, Eccentricity Waltz, Lonesome Reverie, The Turner Shout

Available @ $8.98, plus $1.00 for postage and handling, from Euphonic Sound Recording Co., 357 Leighton Drive, Ventura, California 93001.

If you picked your listening order among the tracks of this acoustically satisfactory disc comprised mostly of numbers written or recorded by the great Harlem tickler James P. Johnson, you'd start at the top with "Liza" (a brilliantly developed and executed selection from its slow, dramatic initial bars through the following four blazing choruses that effectively weave back and forth between incorporation of the melody within complex licks and good old hard-hitting straight-ahead piano) and continue through "Lonesome Reverie" (a seldom-heard, rich, relaxed work with nicely contrasting moods), "The Turner Shout" (Johnny Guarnieri's fast flagwaver, crammed with reverse stride and other tricky Gotham

devices), "Eccentricity Waltz" (light, bouncy, teasing), "Keep Off The Grass " (propulsive boom-chick with single-note down-beats, right hand splashing all over the treble) and "Snowy Morning Blues" (Johnson's late-hours, easy-going masterpiece in relatively fancy dress via Turner's bouquet of elegant embellishments)

At about that point, you'd start to lose interest because that's what Turner seems to have done."Carolina Shout" and "Fascination", typical James P. cutting contest winners, come only partially to life in Turner's careful, somewhat reserved readings, while the perfunctory noodling through "If I Could Be With You" and "Blue Turning Grey Over You" is on a par with what you'll hear in the background at a reasonably classy piano bar. The others have their moments (e.g., nice thick next-to-last chorus on "The Charleston"), but not enough of them to get the overall value of the Lp, even after a full credit allowance for the six superior cuts noted above, above its asking price.

Indiana Historical Society IHS 1001 (2-Lp boxed set) "Indiana Ragtime: A Documentary Album", compiled and annotated by John Edward Hasse and Frank J. Gillis

Side One: Selections and Artists -- Wizzle Dozzle - Jared Carter; *Sapho Rag - John W. "Knocky" Parker; Hot House Rag - John Hasse; *Scarlet Rag - Lowell Schreyer; Mr. Crump Rag - Jesse Crump; Dusty Rag - Frank J. Gillis; *Spring-Time Rag - Wally Rose; *Angel Food Rag - Joe "Fingers" Carr.

*With rhythm accompaniment. All artists on Side One are pianists except banjoist Lowell Schreyer.

Side Two (piano rolls): Selections - Hoosier Rag (Sophus Jergenson composition), That Demon Rag, Perdue Rag, Red Rambler Rag, Orinoco, Klassicle Rag, Love Dreams, Pride Of The Smoky Row, Little Bit Of Rag.

Side Three (by The Indiana University Ragtime Orchestra): Selections -- Winter Garden Rag, Red Onion Rag, The Minstrel Man, Daphne, That Eccentric Rag, Walhalla, The Thriller Rag, The Richmond Rag.

Personnel for Side Three: Klancy Martin, Karl Sievers, trumpets; David Burks, clarinet; Robert Graham, trombone; Alyze Dreiling, Kirsten Nordstrom, violins; Deborah Moree, viola; Marion Middenway, cello, Heidi Wuertemberger, flute/piccolo; David Boeddinghaus, piano; Ted Cox or Greg Gustafson, tuba; David Warne, drums; Keith Brown, conductor.

Side Four: Selections And Artists -- The Minstrel Band - Arthur Pryor's Band; Spring-Time Rag - Vic Meyers Orchestra; Eccentric - New Orleans Rhythm Kings; Manhattan Rag - Irving Mills And His Hotsy Totsy Gang; The Thriller Rag - Bunk Johnson's Jazz Band; Hoosier Rag (Julia Niebergall composition)- Max Morath And The Ragtime Quintet; Whirlwind Rag - Tony Parenti And His Ragtime Gang; Dusty Rag - Turk Murphy's Jazz Band.

All tracks on Sides Two and Three, plus "Wizzle Dozzle" and "Scarlet Rag" on Side One, were recorded especially for IHS 1001. All other tracks are reissues.

Package contains 28-page booklet giving detailed history of ragtime in Indiana, liberally illustrated with photographs, many in colour. Available @ $14.00 ($14.56 for Indiana residents) from Indiana Historicaly Society, 315 West Ohio Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202.

A glance at the foregoing information suggests that this package, covering ragtime published in Indiana or written by Indianans, is a painstaking and thorough job, a suggestion which will be more than confirmed when you appraise your copy of this definitive, outstanding production. As an indication of its delights, note that nine of the compositions are making their initial appearance on disc, ditto for the eight rag-era orchestrations performed on Side Three and ditto again for eight of the nine vintage piano rolls on Side Two. The text of the booklet is exhaustive in its coverage of its subject, fleshed out with many previously rare photos of composers, locales, sheet music, etc., providing irresistible reading for a ragtime historian.

In fact, you'll become so absorbed in the topic that (if you're a player) I'll bet you'll dig out, as I did, the Indiana rags in your library for a run-through. That result could, from the viewpoint of keeping the music alive, be the best of a myriad of felicities to be encountered in experiencing this strongly-recommended, not-to-be-missed set.

*EDITOR -- We're always proud of our Tex, but a new honour made us realize how fortunate we are to have his highly personal reviews. In May, he was the first solo ragtimer ever invited by the annual Dixieland Jubilee in Sacramento. In the following week, he was in Denver where he performed solo ragtime piano with the Ragtime Banjo Commission and spent three nights as a guest (cornet, piano and vocals) with Denver-based Dixieland jazz bands. Congratulations, Tex!*

If you have read the account of Marion Blake's memorial service, I must share with you a story about the photograph of Marion.

Months after attending the tribute to Eubie in Rochester, I recalled a promise to send some pictures of the event to Adelaide Hall in England. Looking over the negatives, I suddenly saw a picture of Marion being escorted onto the stage and knew that it hadn't been printed. Someone in the developing lab obviously thought it was not printable and didn't bother.

I took the negative back to the same camera shop that afternoon and insisted that they process the film, regardless of the unseen developer's opinion. Business took me out of the city for some time, so it was late June when I finally returned with my receipt to pick up the developed picture.

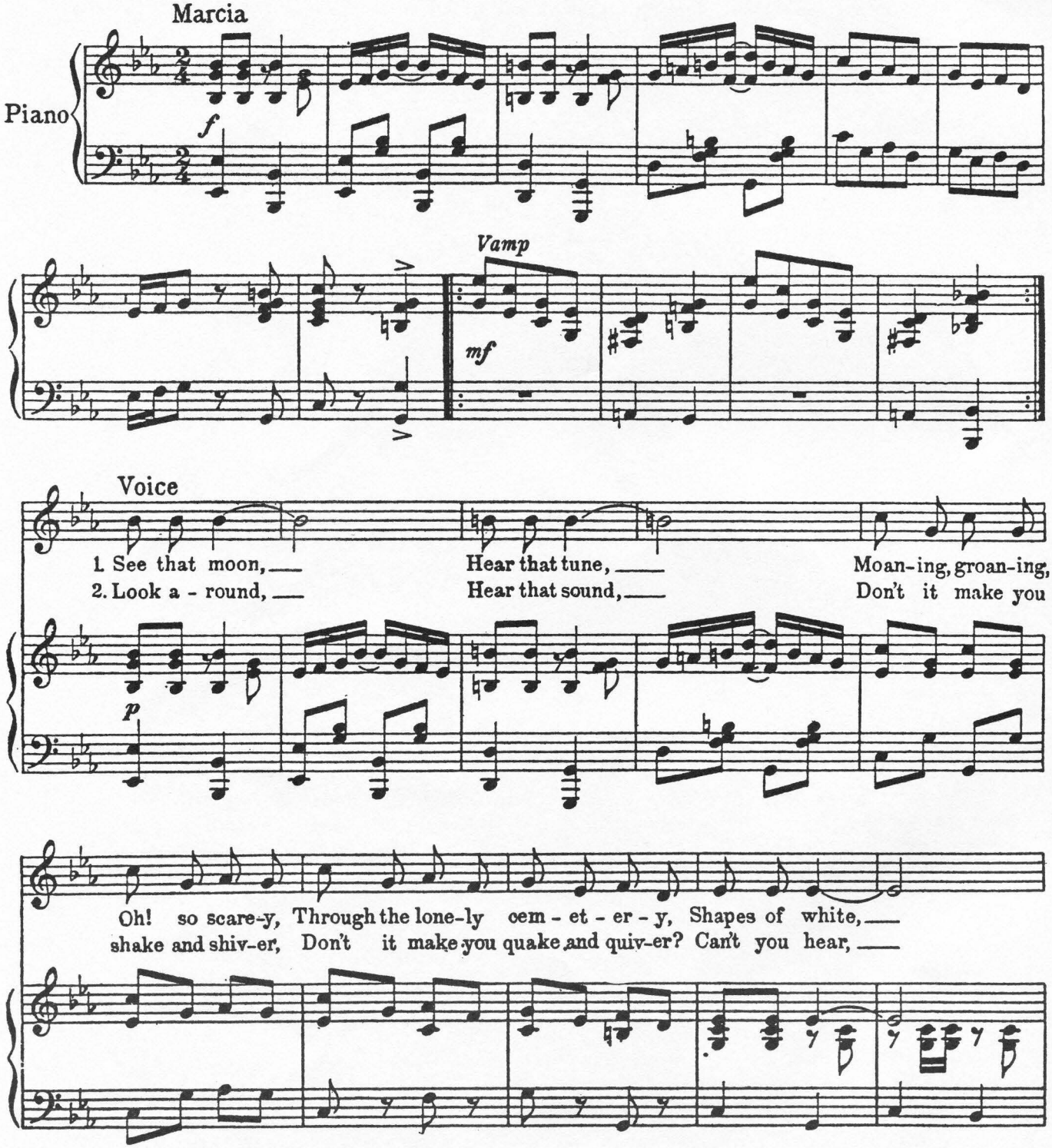
As I drove home, I heard a brief news item reporting that Marion Blake, the wife of well-known Eubie Blake, had just died. I pulled the car over to the side of the road and opened the envelope to look at the print I had just picked up.

It was the same picture that I had taken of Marion being escorted onto the stage to join Eubie, but it now looked different. And I knew why.

When I took the picture in January, Marion was acknowledging the applause of the crowd at the Eastman Theatre. When I looked at it in late June, she was waving goodbye.

# The Skeleton Rag

Words by
EDWARD MADDEN

Music by
PERCY WENRICH

Marcia
Piano
f
Vamp
mf
Voice
1. See that moon, Hear that tune, Moan-ing, groan-ing,
2. Look a - round, Hear that sound, Don't it make you
p
Oh! so scare-y, Through the lone-ly cem - et - er - y, Shapes of white,
shake and shiv-er, Don't it make you quake and quiv-er? Can't you hear,

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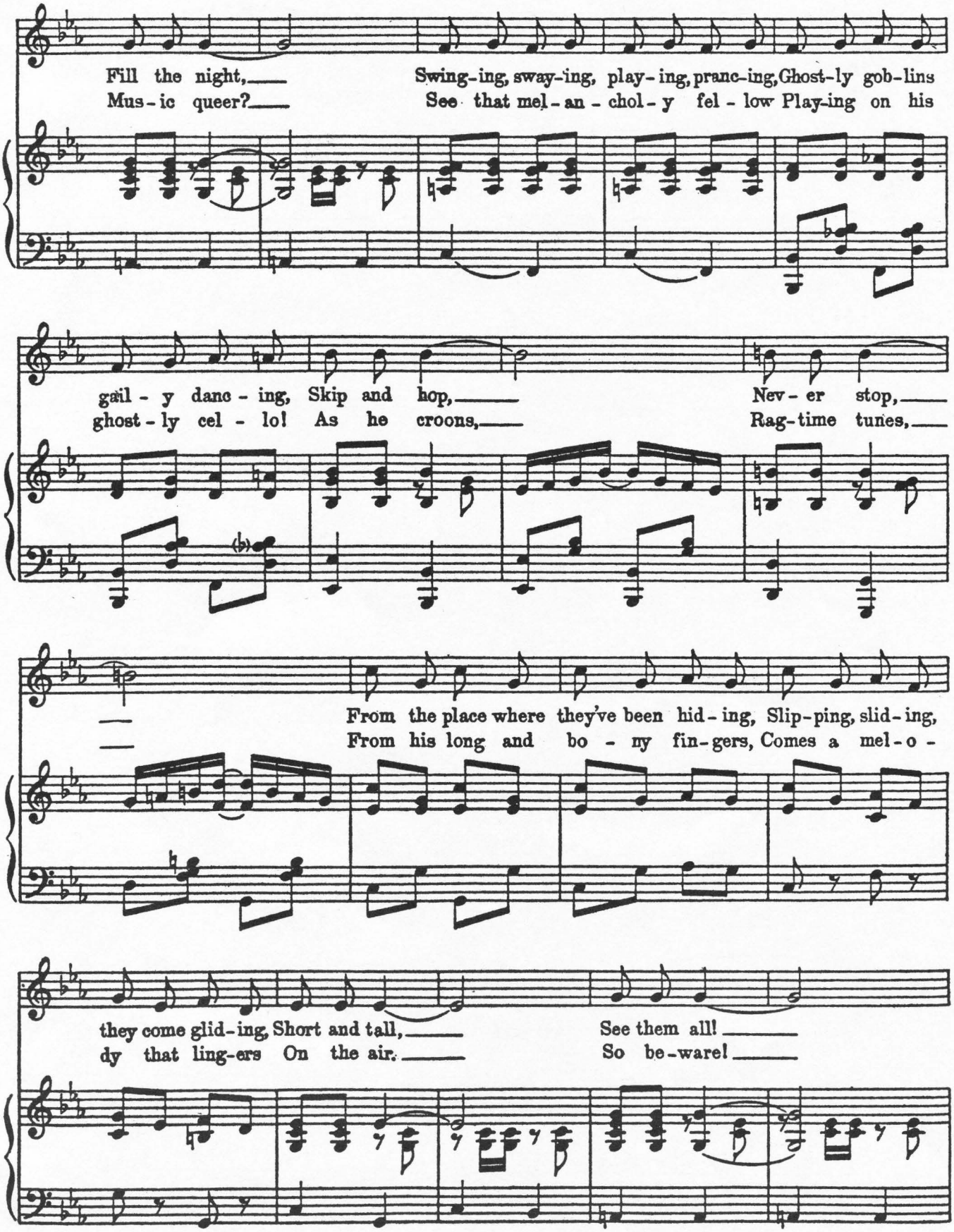
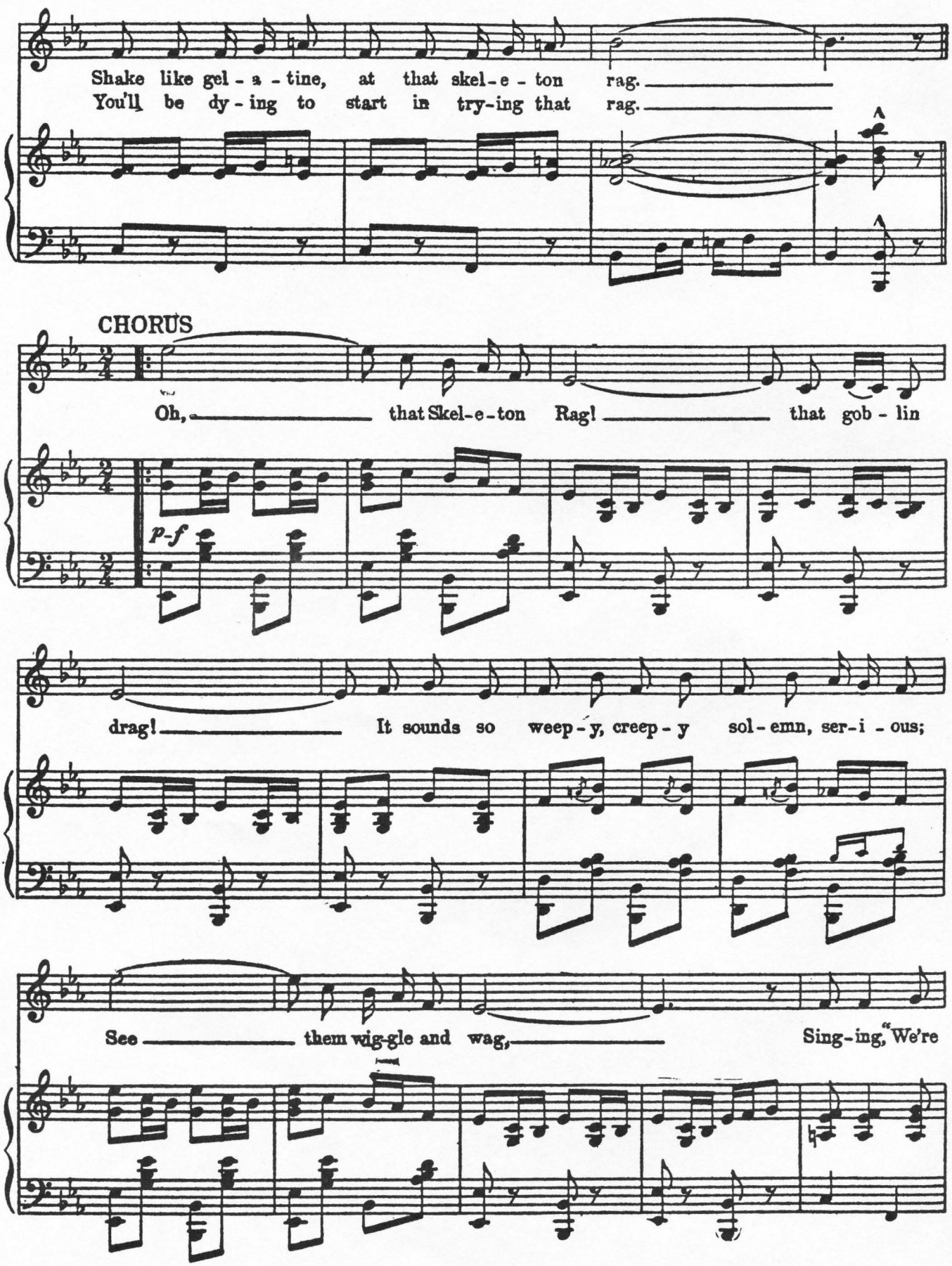
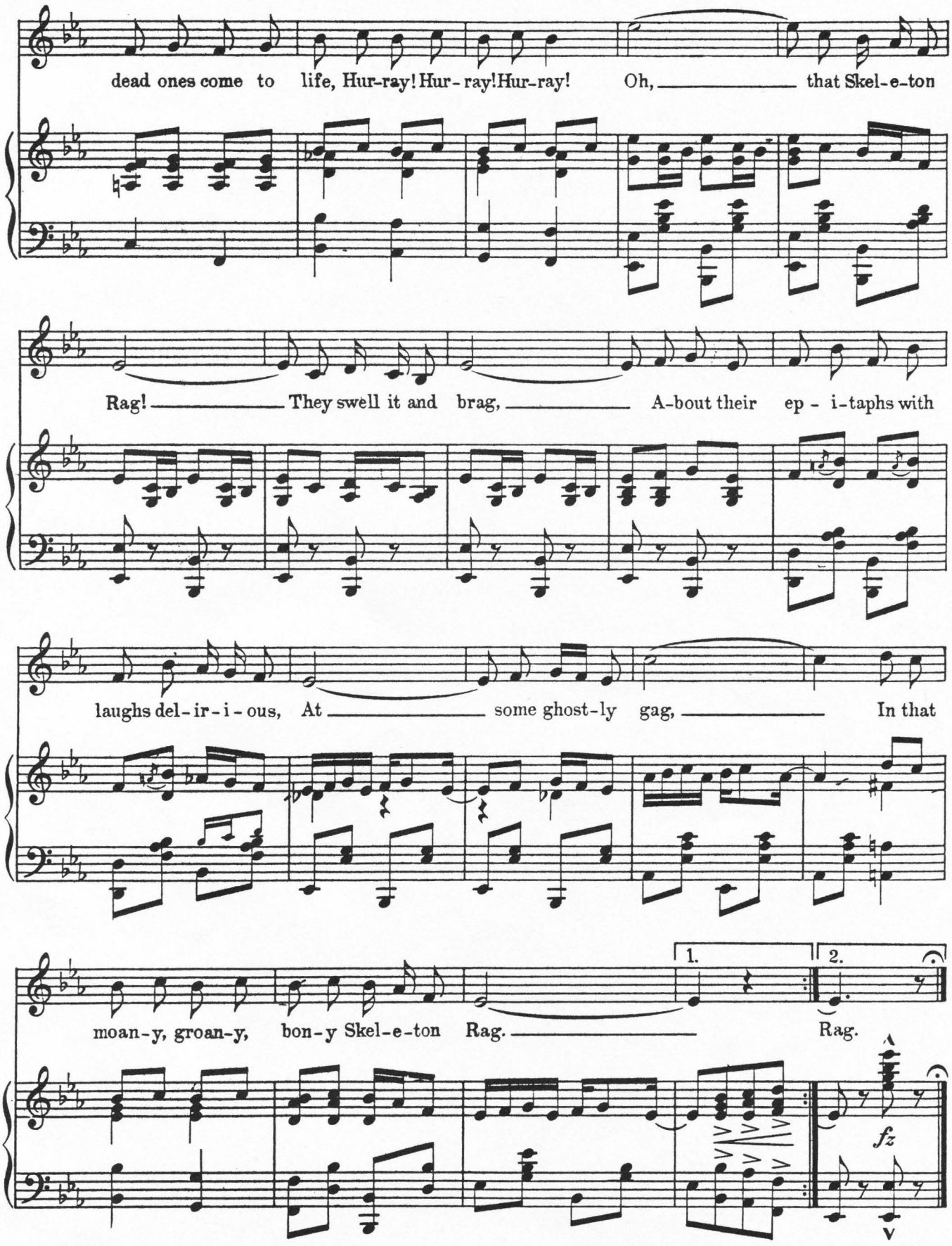
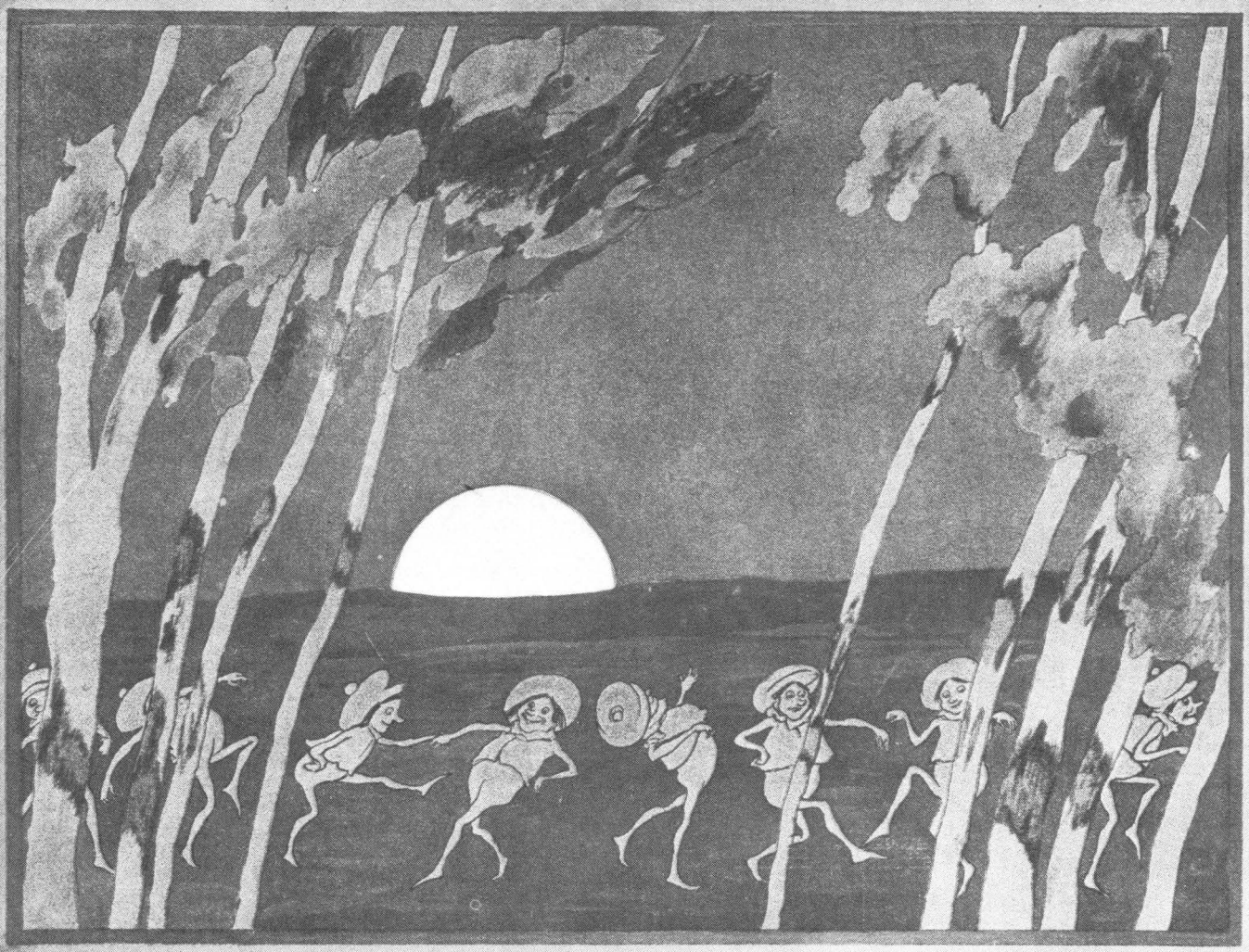

Fill the night,
Mus-ic queer?
Swing-ing, sway-ing, play-ing, pranc-ing, Ghost-ly gob-lins
See that mel-an-chol-y fel-low Play-ing on his
gail-y danc-ing, Skip and hop,
ghost-ly cel-lo! As he croons,
Nev-er stop,
Rag-time tunes,
From the place where they've been hid-ing, Slip-ping, slid-ing,
From his long and bo-ny fin-gers, Comes a mel-o-
they come glid-ing, Short and tall,
dy that ling-ers On the air.
See them all!
So be-ware!

Shake like gel - a - tine, at that skel - e - ton rag.
You'll be dy - ing to start in try-ing that rag.
CHORUS
Oh, that Skel-e-ton Rag! that gob - lin
p-f
drag! It sounds so weep - y, creep - y sol - emn, ser-i - ous;
See them wig-gle and wag, Sing-ing, "We're

dead ones come to life, Hur-ray! Hur-ray! Hur-ray! Oh, that Skel-e-ton
Rag! They swell it and brag, A-bout their ep - i-taphs with
laughs del-ir-i-ous, At some ghost-ly gag, In that
moan-y, groan-y, bon-y Skel-e-ton Rag. Rag.
1.
2.
fz

POPULAR EDITION

# THE SKELETON RAG

SONG



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MUSIC BY
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